

# WWT/JNCC/SNH Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme

## survey results 2012/13

### East Canadian High Arctic Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota*

#### 1. Abundance

The East Canadian High Arctic population of Light-bellied Brent Goose has been rapidly increasing for the past 20 years. In October 2011, the 16th international census produced an estimated population size of 48,002, the highest to date (Figure 1). The October 2012 census also produced a high total count of 41,465, the second highest census total (Figure 1), continuing the increasing trend. However, this total was 14% lower than the previous year and is presumably a consequence of the poor breeding year.

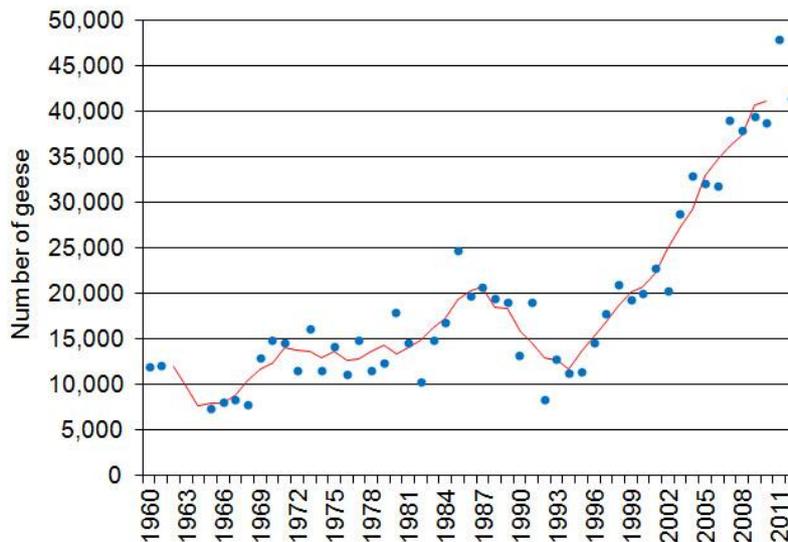


Figure 1. Annual census-derived estimates of Canadian Light-bellied Brent Goose population size, 1960 – 2012. Five-year running mean shown as red line (e.g. mean for 2009 is from population estimates for 2007 – 2011).

#### 2. Breeding success

Summer 2011 was a particularly successful breeding season, with autumn age assessments indicating that there was 25.0% young amongst flocks (20,703 geese aged) and a mean brood size of 2.69 young per successful pair (Figure 2). This was followed by a poor breeding season in 2012, with only 1.9% young among autumn flocks (n=11,672), although mean brood size (2.61 young per successful pair) was similar to 2011 (Figure 2).

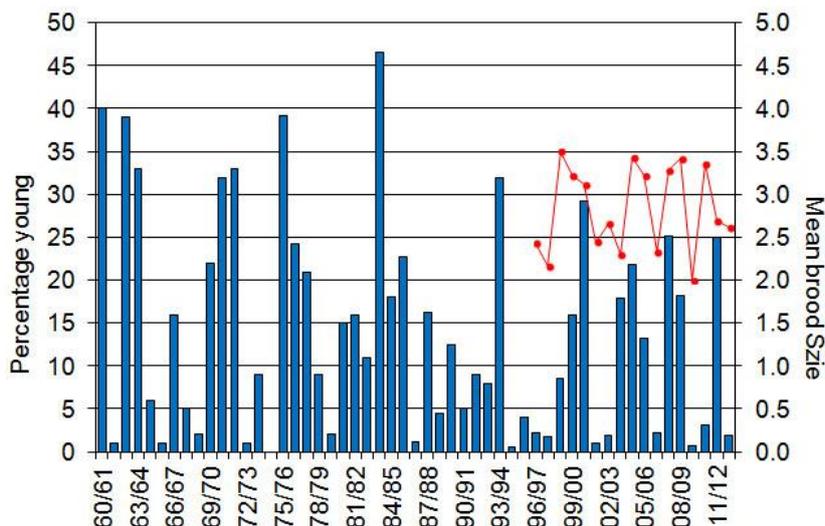


Figure 2. The mean percentage of young (blue columns) and mean brood size (red circles) of East Canadian High Arctic Light-bellied Brent Geese, 1996/97 – 2012/13.

### 3. Discussion

The trend in the ECHA Light-bellied Brent Goose population is one of continued increase and the trend has generally mirrored their breeding success, particularly in recent years. The increase in size between 2002/03 (when complete censuses of all the main sites in Ireland and Iceland began) and 2012/13 reflects the number of good and above average breeding seasons during that time.

There is relatively little information available on the conditions in the breeding grounds during 2012, but in 2011 rodent abundance was reported as high and most predators as abundant.

This report should be cited as:

WWT. 2013. *Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme: survey results 2012/13 East Canadian High Arctic Light-bellied Brent Goose* Branta hrota hrota WWT/JNCC/SNH, Slimbridge.

© The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the copyright holder.

This report was produced under the Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme (GSMP). This programme monitors numbers and breeding success of geese and swans in the UK during the non-breeding season. GSMP is organised by the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust in partnership with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (on behalf of Natural Resources Wales, Natural England and the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside) and Scottish Natural Heritage.



## Goose & Swan Monitoring